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## Sommario/riassunto

In this magisterial study, John McWilliams traces the development of New England's influential cultural identity. Through written responses to historical crises from early New England through the pre-Civil War period, McWilliams argues that the meaning of 'New England' despite claims for its consistency was continuously reformulated. The significance of past crises was forever being reinterpreted for the purpose of meeting succeeding crises. The crises he examines include starvation, the Indian wars, the Salem witch trials, the revolution of 1775-76 and slavery. Integrating history, literature, politics and religion this is one of the most comprehensive studies of the meaning of 'New England' to appear in print. McWilliams considers a range of writing including George Bancroft's *History of the United States*, the political essays of Samuel Adams, the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne and the poetry of Robert Lowell. This compelling book is essential reading for historians and literary critics of New England.

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